



STATE OF NEVADA  
**STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

333 W. Nye Lane, Room 126  
Carson City, Nevada 89706-0857  
**Phone (775) 687-6977 - Fax (775) 687-3783**

**DRAFT MINUTES**  
**STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

**Wednesday, February 23, 2005 at 9:00 am**  
**Nevada Division of Conservation Districts**  
**123 W. Nye Lane Room 217**  
**Carson City, NV 89706**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

**A.** Chairman Settlemeyer called the meeting to order at 9:05am. Self-introductions of those present as follows:

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

James Settlemeyer, Gardnerville  
Keith Whipple, Hiko  
Joe Sicking, Paradise Valley  
Howard Glancy, Dayton Valley  
Don Henderson, Carson City  
Judy Currier, Las Vegas  
Dr. Rangesan Narayanan, UNR, College of Agriculture

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Vance Vesco, Winnemucca  
Sterling Wines, Ely

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Pamela B. Wilcox, Executive Secretary to the Commission  
Chris Freeman, President of the Nevada Association of Conservation Districts  
Kelly McGowan, Nevada Division of Conservation Districts  
Sandi Gotta, Nevada Division of Conservation Districts  
Ana J. Jimenez, Nevada Division of Conservation Districts  
Christi Latragna, Nevada Division of State Lands  
Bill Elder, Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Wayne Howle, Attorney General's Office  
Greg Currier, Las Vegas

**II. REVIEW, AMMENDMENT AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES – \*ACTION\***

**A.** Judy made a motion to approve the minutes from the October 26 & 28, 2004 commission meeting. Howard seconded the motion, motion passed.

### III. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

### IV. INTERNAL DIVISION REPORTS

#### A. *Status of the Division of Conservation Districts*

##### 1. *Fiscal Report* – Pamela B. Wilcox

- a Ms. Wilcox gave a brief report on the division's budget.

##### 2. *General* – Pamela B. Wilcox

- a Ms. Wilcox gave a report on the department's new building.

##### 3. *Conservation District Meeting Logs* – Kelly McGowan – Sandi Gotta

- a Kelly gave a report on the district's meeting logs and said that districts have been holding regular meetings. Kelly pointed out that Ruby Valley sent a letter to the commission requesting them to reconsider their current position of "not in good standing". Kelly stated that Ruby Valley has made every effort to be in compliance and so far they have satisfied the three meeting requirement. Ruby Valley also intends to develop a new work plan and budget during their upcoming meeting in March.

- b Kelly asked the commission to review the commission list, which reflects the term date for each of the commission members. Judy Currier, Dr. Rangesan Narayanan, Joe Sicking and Don Henderson requested staff to make some changes to their contact information. Pam reminded the commission that by statute the Nevada Association of Conservation Districts gives the Governor a list with their recommendations for new commissioners before the end of April. The list should include at least three supervisors, one from each area, no more than one person can be from any one county or conservation district. The Governor will select two people to serve from the three regions and one person to serve at-large. Currently Keith Whipple serves as the "at-large representative".

- c Kelly reviewed the division's measurement indicators. The purpose of measuring performance indicators is to rate the ability of the Division of Conservation Districts to fulfill the objectives as outlined in the Division of Conservation Districts' Strategic Plan. Kelly also mentioned that requests for training from conservation districts are increasing. He and Sandi will meet with every district that requests assistance, as much as their in-state budget will allow.

- d Kelly presented the commission a breakdown of conservation district's financial matching funds for the years of 1995, 1996, 1999 and 2004. In 1995 CDs received no state funding. In 1996, CDs matched the state funding at a rate of 4.12:1; in 1999 the matching rate was 6.61:1; and in 2004 CDs matched the state funding at a rate of 15.7:1. James expressed his appreciation for preparing the figures that he had requested from staff.

- e Pam gave a summary on the CRM. Noxious weeds were a predominant topic during the last meeting she attended.

##### 4. *General Correspondence* – Kelly McGowan – Sandi Gotta

- a Sandi reported on her trip to the National Association of Conservation Districts in Atlanta, Georgia. She said the focus of the meeting was partnerships. NACD's new president is Billy Wilson from Oklahoma. Sandi said that topics discussed during the NACD annual meeting were Open Meeting Law, Ethics, operational procedures, Farm Bill, NACD

restructuring and strategies, and partnerships with agencies and politicians. Getting a federal earmark for districts is priority for staff. Sandi talked to different states that receive federal earmarks to get an idea of how other states have been successful in getting federal funds for conservation districts.

**V. REPORTS TO THE COMMISSION (please limit to 5 minutes)**

A. *Department of Conservation & Natural Resources* – Allen Biaggi – not present

B. *Department of Agriculture* – Don Henderson reported on the following non-budgetary BDR's:

- BDR 273 – Nevada Medical Marijuana Program.
- BDR 648 – Chronic Wasting Disease in Deer and Elk species.
- BDR 657 – Confidentiality of Business Records Held by the Department of Agriculture.
- BDR XXX – Petroleum Products & Antifreeze.

Don also gave a brief update on the new Department of Agriculture building in Elko.

C. *University of Nevada, Reno* – Dr. Rangesan Narayanan gave an update on new positions at the College of Agriculture and the Agriculture Experiment Station in Reno. Dr. Rang gave handouts to the commission regarding the status report of the Great Basin Plant Materials Center in Fallon, a joint effort with NRCS.

D. *Natural Resources Conservation Service* – Bill Elder gave an update on behalf of Richard Vigil.

- a Regarding the sage grouse; Judge Manson who is one of the assistants to the Under Secretary of the Department of Interior gave a brief, saying that enlisting the sage grouse as an endangered species was a failure of broad-based conservation efforts.
- b Emergency conservation program, NRCS has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding, interagency agreement with Farm Service Agency to provide technical assistance to emergency conservation program applicants. This took effect the beginning of February.
- c Lincoln and Clark Counties were affected by rainfall in January; as a result there have been considerable damages. NRCS received approximately \$1.25 million to provide financial assistance and \$250,000 for technical assistance.
- d Nevada State Conservationist, Richard Vigil and California Acting State Conservationist, Ed Burton have reached an agreement for servicing Alpine, Mono and northern Washoe Counties.
- e NRCS received a conservation partnership grant request from Humboldt County for weed management. There will be a technical assistance committee meeting on March 8, 2005 at 10 am at the NRCS office. The technical assistance committee needs to review that request for content, completeness, thoroughness and appropriateness. If the committee approves of the request Richard Vigil will be obligated to forward the request to the chief of NRCS to be considered for funding.
- f There is \$30,000 available funding left over from a previous round of grant requests. The funds are not yet available to NRCS, but they hope to send a RFP as soon as the funds are available. When the RFPs are available, NRCS will send electronic and public notices. Specific notices or specific packets will be available by request only. The grant rules will be the same as last year's. The grants will be funded under the previous 'water quality' grant program specifications.
- g NRCS State Office will be moving to a new building on March 14, 2005.

E. *Farm Service Agency* – Roger Van Valkenburg – not present.

F. *Nevada Association of Conservation Districts* – President, Chris Freeman

- Chris attended the National Association of Conservation Districts in Atlanta. He donated items for the legislative auction, which sold for a total of \$1595. Items donated by Chris generated the most money out of all the items that were auctioned. The items were raw opal stones he mined in Pershing County and some cut stone bookends.
- Chris said that Nevada contributes more than their fair share in funding to NACD. Nevada has the largest percentage of participating districts compared with other states that have larger districts. As a result, the state gets some of the money back in the regions, which consequently is matched by the Western Coalition. With that funding, **NACD** was able to hire an NACD representative in Washington, DC who represents the west and will be working on strictly western issues.
- There was a shortfall in dues last year because six districts did not pay dues. The association received some extra money from the Conservation District of Southern Nevada and Lincoln County Conservation District last fiscal year, which provided a little extra funding for some of the association's programs. The balance from the previous fiscal year was \$13, which was carried over to the current fiscal year. Chris reported that he mailed out dues notices to all the districts. So far Tonopah, Lincoln and Starr Valley have paid their dues.
- During the national meeting the federal budget was handed out for 2006. There are some major cuts in the budget. The RC&D programs are proposed to be reduced by half and as a result, about 119 RC&D offices would be closed. The other budget cuts include a reduction of 2200 positions in NRCS. Bill Elder responded that the reduction of positions was actually a re-direction of efforts and not so much a reduction of positions. The Emergency Watershed Program has zero funding; BLM's grazing funds were also zeroed out. EPA will also have major cuts in 2006; the water quality management funds were zeroed out and the 319 program was not funded.
- Ray Ledgerwood has been working under contract with NRCS, providing NRCS employees assistance on being more effective with district supervisors and being allowed to work with the association of conservation districts.

## **VI. REEVALUATION OF DETERMINATION OF STANDING OF RUBY VALLEY CONSERVATION DISTRICT (NAC 548.100) \*ACTION\***

- A. *Request by Ruby Valley Conservation District for re-evaluation by the State Conservation Commission to determine district standing.* Kelly gave the commission a letter from Ruby Valley requesting the commission to reevaluate their status.
- B. *Division staff review of Ruby Valley Conservation District's records.* Staff advised the commission that Ruby Valley had met all the requirements to be found in good standing.
- C. *Public Hearing.* James opened a public hearing. No public was present.
- D. *Conservation Commission Discussion.* There was no discussion.
- E. *Commission Determination.* Joe made a motion to find Ruby Valley Conservation District in good standing. Howard seconded, motion passed.

## **VII. OLD BUSINESS -**

*Update on possible meeting with NDOW about Compensatory Wildlife Damage Programs.*  
**\*ACTION\*** Kelly said that he talked to Patty Wagner from the Department of Wildlife. He was told that the commission should get on the Wildlife Commission's mailing list, so they would be informed of all upcoming Wildlife Commission and local wildlife advisory

committee meetings. Kelly gave the commission contact information for the Wildlife Commission and all of the wildlife advisory committees. Kelly told the SCC that he had requested the Department of Wildlife to add him to their Wildlife Commission's contact list. He will attend one of their meetings.

*B. Discussion/approval of state Conservation Commission's Strategic Plan for 2005-2010 developed in October 2004. \*ACTION\** Keith made a motion to give staff direction and more time to work on the Commission's Strategic Plan. Howard seconded, motion passed.

## **VII. NEW BUSINESS**

*A. Discussion on supporting changes to the Financial Disclosure Statements statute. \*ACTION\**

- a. Wayne Howle was in attendance to answer questions from the commission. James gave a brief history on how the Financial Disclosure Statements issue came about. After a lengthy discussion about who is in support of completing the Financial Disclosure Statements, Joe made a motion to support assemblyman John Carpenter's AB 64, which would exempt elected district supervisors from filing the Financial Disclosure Statements. The exemption would be retroactive to January 2004. Howard Glancy seconded, motion passed. Judy expressed that the CDSN board of supervisors are in favor of completing the Financial Disclosure statements; she said her board believes that as state officials it is part of their responsibility to be accountable for managing state funds.

*B. Discussion and possible action on the possible effects funds generated through Nevada land sales may have on conservation districts and programs throughout Nevada. \*ACTION\**

- Pam gave a brief review of how the BLM accounts for the moneys from the Southern Nevada land sales. Pam said that the state can spend the money on land acquisitions, capital improvements for federal facilities in Clark County only, parks and trails, Lake Tahoe, Multi Species Habitat Conservation Plan, public information litter control problems and other projects. Information of how much money is spent on each program can be found at the BLM website. Judy made a motion for the commission to write a letter to Nevada's senators and congressmen supporting Nevada's continued expenditures of all funds generated from land sales through the authority granted in the Southern Nevada Land Act. The letter would not support the proposal of funds being used in Washington D.C. to pay down the federal deficit as proposed by Washington. Keith seconded. Motion passed.

*C. Update and review of current bill draft requests and other legislative matters that may affect the commission, the division or individual conservation districts. \*ACTION\**

- a. The two bills that will be heard are A.B. 94 and A.B. 64. A.B. 94 requests supplemental appropriation to State Department of Conservation & Natural Resources. A.B. 64 exempts elected conservation district supervisors from filing a statement of financial disclosure.
- b. James discussed the possibility of going to the legislature to request additional funding for districts. Keith made a motion to support Commission efforts to request a cost of living increase. Judy seconded, motion passed.

*D. Possible changes to "Open Range" law requiring livestock owners to erect fences where public land interfaces with private land to keep livestock from entering. Currently it is the private landowner who is responsible for erecting fences to keep livestock from entering. \*ACTION\**

- a. For the benefit of natural resources, James expressed interest in supporting current efforts to maintain Nevada's status as an open range state. Keith made a

motion for James to testify at the legislature in favor of keeping Nevada an open range state. Joe seconded, motion passed.

**VIII. STAFF ITEMS - Division Staff Comments**

Unless otherwise listed with a topic description, this portion of the agenda is limited to announcements and discussions of items proposed for action at future meetings.

Kelly said there was a questionnaire on NACD's website that districts could find useful for assessing their district.

**IX. COMMISSIONER ITEMS**

- a Judy said that three years ago the CD of Southern Nevada entered into an agreement with City of Henderson to develop the Acacia Park Demonstration Gardens and they just had their grand opening in November. Of all the park's gardens, there is only one garden left to be completed. The project total was over \$600,000. It was completed without funding from the City of Henderson. The project was funded with grants from NDEP the, Bureau of Reclamation and private donations.
- b CD of Southern Nevada in conjunction with Air Quality Management, Southern Nevada Home Builders and MHACP, created a calendar from student poster contest winners.

**X. PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment.

**XI. NEXT COMMISSION MEETING – \*ACTION\***

- A. Tentative the next commission meeting will be in Eureka on June 13, 2005. Fallon is the second alternative.
- B. No agenda items requested by the commission.

**XII. ADJOURN – \*ACTION\***

James adjourned the meeting at 2:45 pm.